UNITED NATIONS

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Secretariat

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15 September 1992

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INITIAL CLASSIFICATION OF POSTS IN THE GENERAL SERVICE AND RELATED CATEGORIES IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA*

1. At its twenty-sixth session in 1987, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) approved job classification standards, based on a seven-level grading structure, for posts in the General Service and related categories in Baghdad. The purpose of the present instruction is to set out the policy and procedures for the implementation of the initial General Service classification exercise in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), based on the approved standards and grading structure, as well as the procedures for appeals in the context of the initial exercise.

I. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

2. The basic principle of the post classification system is that it is job-oriented. The classification of each post depends on the nature of the duties and responsibilities assigned to it and not on the personal qualifications or experience of the incumbent or of a candidate for the post.

3. The General Service category post classification system is composed of a set of classification standards consisting of a point-factor matrix, a glossary of terms, benchmark job descriptions and a grade level conversion chart. Each post has been analysed on the basis of these standards. The standards differentiate the seven levels according to the following factors:

(a) Difficulty of work;

(b) Work relationships;

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* Personnel Manual index No. 2170.

(c) Responsibility for the work of others;

(d) Physical environment;

(e) Knowledge and qualifications required.

Initial classification

4. For the initial classification of posts in the General Service and related categories in ESCWA, a description of the duties and responsibilities was completed for each General Service post or group of identical posts, including those that were vacant. The job description was signed by the staff member and certified by his/her supervisor.

5. The classification analysis of each post was conducted independently by two classification officers of the Compensation and Classification Service, Office of Human Resources Management, and approved by the Chief of the Service. The results of the classification analysis were approved by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, and notices of classification results were forwarded to the Executive Secretary of ESCWA for implementation. Each staff member and the head of the relevant office/division will be notified accordingly.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

6. The results of the initial classification exercise for ESCWA will be implemented as of 1 January 1989, in accordance with the procedures for implementation set out in the present instruction. The classification of a post will not negatively affect the existing contractual status, salary or other entitlements of the staff member concerned.

7. If the grade level of the classified post is numerically lower than the present grade level of the staff member encumbering the post, the staff member will retain the present grade level.

8. If the grade level of the classified post is numerically the same as the present grade level of the staff member, that level will apply.

9. If the classified level of the post is numerically higher than the present grade level of the staff member, the incumbent of the post will normally be placed at the classified level of the post, subject to the following criteria:

(a) If the grade level of the classified post is numerically greater by one than his or her present grade level, the staff member will be placed at the classified level as of 1 January 1989, provided that as of that date the staff member had been performing the functions described in the job description for at least one year and had at least one year's seniority in his or her present grade level. The normal procedures with respect to the computation of steps when implementing promotion will be followed;

(b) If the grade level of the classified post is numerically greater by two levels than his or her present grade level, the staff member will be placed at the classified level as of 1 January 1989, provided that as of that date the staff member had been performing the functions described in the job description for at least one year and had at least two years of seniority in his or her present grade level. The normal procedures with respect to the computation of steps when implementing promotion will be followed.

10. Cases of staff members who were encumbering and performing the functions of a given post, and who during the one-year period preceding 1 January 1989 were assigned to another post classified at a level lower than that of his/her previous post, will be the object of a special review by the ESCWA General Service Classification Appeals and Review Committee to determine whether the staff member has a claim to the higher level.

11. In those cases where the grade level of the classified post is numerically higher than the present level of the staff member, but he or she lacks the required seniority either in performing functions or in grade, the promotion to the higher grade will be delayed until such time that the seniority requirements are met.

12. In respect of the posts classified in the Professional category, a recommendation will be made to the General Assembly that it approve reclassification of the post from the General Service to the Professional category under the current budgetary procedures and allow incumbents to be considered for promotion to the Professional category without having to take the competitive examination, provided that the staff member performed the functions described in the job description for at least three years prior to 1 January 1989.

Appeal against the initial classification

13. The classification of a post may be appealed in cases where the office/division in which the post is located and/or the individual encumbering the post do not agree with the classification level of the post. Reviews of classification decisions regarding a specific post can be requested either by the head of the office/division concerned or by the individual incumbent, or both.

14. Staff members and/or offices/divisions wishing to appeal against the results of the initial classification exercise must submit their appeals in accordance with the procedures outlined in paragraph 15 below. While additional information may be submitted in relation to the correctness or completeness of the job description used to classify a post, no revised or new job description for a given job will be receivable in the context of the appeal process. The grade levels of other posts in ESCWA or at other duty stations are not relevant to the review of a particular classification decision and will not constitute grounds for appeal.

15. The appeals procedures with regards to classification decisions are as follows:

(a) Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary of ESCWA within 60 days of receipt of the classification notice. Submissions must include specific information concerning the reasons for the appeal and must relate to the application of the classification standards. A copy of the job description on the basis of which the post was classified should be attached to the appeal;

(b) For posts classified at levels GS-1 to GS-6, the Executive Secretary of ESCWA will submit cases of appeals to the ESCWA Classification Appeals and Review Committee, together with an analysis of the case by the Personnel Section, Division of Administration, ESCWA. The appellant will be informed accordingly. The terms of reference of the ESCWA Classification Appeals and Review Committee are contained in the annex to the present instruction;

(c) The ESCWA Classification Appeals and Review Committee will review the appeal and make its recommendations to the Executive Secretary of ESCWA. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA will take a final decision concerning the classification of posts at levels GS-1 to GS-6. The office concerned and the incumbent will be notified accordingly;

(d) Cases of appeal for posts which were classified at level GS-7, and cases which were reviewed by the ESCWA Classification Appeals and Review Committee and considered to be at a level higher than GS-6, will be transmitted by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management for decision;

(e) If the Office for Human Resources Management does not concur with an appeal in respect of cases specified in subparagraph (d) above, the case will be referred to the New York General Service Classification Appeals and Review Committee. Having examined the appeal, the Committee will communicate its findings and recommendations to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, whose decision thereon will be final.

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Annex I

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE GENERAL SERVICE CLASSIFICATION APPEALS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Composition

1. The General Service Classification Appeals and Review Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is established with effect from the date of the present administrative instruction.

2. The Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA as follows:

(a) A chairperson appointed by the Executive Secretary after consultation with staff representatives;

(b) Two members and two alternates nominated by the administration;

(c) Two members and two alternates nominated by the staff representatives.

3. The Committee shall elect a vice-chairperson from within its membership.

4. Staff of the Personnel Section, Division of Administration, are not eligible for appointment to the Committee.

5. A secretary shall be assigned to the Committee by the Chief, Division of Administration.

6. The presence of at least two members or alternates, together with the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, will be necessary to constitute a quorum.

Functions

7. The Committee shall review, for levels GS-1 to GS-6 inclusive, appeals referred to it pertaining to the initial classification of posts in the General Service and related categories in ESCWA. The Committee shall be guided in its review by the job classification standards and shall use as a reference the related benchmark job descriptions. The Committee shall ensure that all appeals relate to the application of the classification standards.

8. The Committee will forward its recommendations on all cases referred to it to the Executive Secretary of ESCWA.

9. The Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure. It shall determine the information it deems necessary to carry out its tasks in addition to the written submission of the party registering the appeal. The Committee may invite a representative of the Personnel Section, Division of Administration, ESCWA, or any other staff member, to provide any information it may require.